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(FROM A FEMININE POETIC VIEWPOINT)

BY  
ROSE



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# **SERIOUSLY      INCORPORATED**

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

To my previous audiences and readers, thanks for your support and encouragement to again publish my thoughts and yours. A special thanks to my Programming Editor, Karen Stanley, my Writing Editors, Roslyn Harmon and Ed Johnson. As always, a loving arm of appreciation to my father, LEROY BURNS for feeding me good food on week-ends and reminding me from whence I have come. To LeRoy Thomas, thank you for that special encouragement which only you know how to provide. MAMA, if you were here, I believe you would even approve of Section V. To Mary Moffet, Mark Davis, Howard and RoseMary, you are very special people.

Above all, to my Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for giving me a new life.



# GLOSSARY

It became interesting and delightful when I learned that many of my own associates did not understand some of the terminology and slang presented in my poetry. Some even admitted that perhaps their own "SERIOUSLY INCORPORATED" culture contributed to this limited perspective. Therefore, I am submitting an abbreviated glossary to assist in reading "SERIOUSLY INCORPORATED".

- Blood (reference to a person; of kindred spirit)
- Bout (about)
- BUPPIES (Black Urban Professionals)
- Cause or cauz (because)
- Chitterlings (chitlins; hog intestines cooked for eating)
- Crap (non-sense)
- Dap (a cool or stylish way of walking)
- Gittin' (getting)
- Hood (neighborhood; ghetto usually)
- Jess (just)
- Messin' (messaging or being bothered by)
- Muscadine (a grape/plum type of fruit grown in the South)
- Naw (no; negative)
- No Mo (no more or no longer)
- SERIOUSLY INCORPORATED (wanting to be inclusive of that which perpetrates success and power in any given arena; often to the point of losing self-integrity; often losing basic morale values; often losing genuine identity; often referred to as bourgeoisie)
- Sho Nuff (sure enough; affirmative)
- Tater (potato)
- Visine (to clear up one's vision, like the eye drop)
- Word endings with "in'" are "ing" ending words
- Y'all (you all)
- YO! (greetings or getting one's attention)
- Yo' Mama (your mother; negative connotation; can sometimes be an invitation to fight)



## DEDICATION

To Adam Landon Davis, my five-year old Sweetie-Pie.

With Love,

*Mommy*  
MOMMY

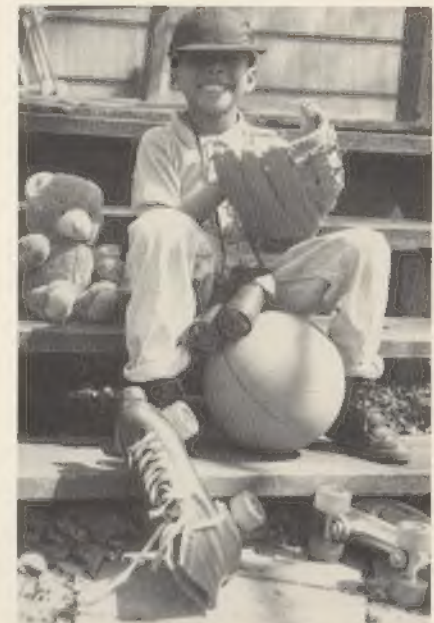


## MY SON

Of course I desire You  
to be strong gallant  
determined and wise  
sensitive honest  
with just enough pride  
perceptive decisive  
a leader - the best  
well organized logical  
set standards for the rest  
articulate handsome  
happy secure  
mild mannered self-confident  
reliable mature  
straight forward tenacious  
always in good health  
courteous protective  
possess power and wealth  
GOD fearing spirit filled  
prepared for any task  
loving life moving freely  
no regrets of what's past  
...s

h  
o  
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l  
d...

You fall short on these items  
that's okay too  
possessing the above can only  
enhance the real you  
acquiring perfect character  
Son, is rarely achieved  
but, as a Mother who loves  
You...already I'm quite pleased.



# CONTENTS

## PART I - SPLINTERS IN THE LADDER TO SUCCESS

Splinters In The Ladder To Success	2
She's A Climbing That Corporate Ladder	3
Sexual Harassment	4
Her Desire	5
Pain Plagues The Innocent	6
A Cup of Tea At The White House	7
Lunch With Some Real Women	8
My Girlfriend's Mother When We Were Kids	10
My Girlfriend At 38	11
Mama - Always There For Me	12
Her Dying Prayer	13
Girl Friend	14
Competitive Fast Track	15
Bull S	16
Creator's Designer Black Male	17
His Favorite Aftershave	18
Brother Man	20
Your Card Please	21
Yo Blood	22
An African Brother I Met	23
Where Are The Black Men Going	24
Juke Box	25
When The Cookie Gets Creamed	26
BUPPIES	28

## PART II - BEYOND WATERS COLORS

Beyond Water Colors	30
Fine Art	31
Attitudinal You	32
Chin Up	33
SomeTeen Suicide Syndrome	34
Pretty Braids	36
From Dust To Mud	37
Boys' Games	38
For You, Illiterate Child	39

## PART III - SOMETHING KINDA SUNDAYFIED

Where Does My Strenth Come From	42
The Black Church Experience	43
Dealing With Fear	44
I'll Settle For Peace	45
A Preacher Once Said	46
Family Trees	47

The Hallelujah Amen Song Poem	48
Some Hell of A Gain	49
Artistic Simplicity	50
African Drums and African Dancer	51
Taste De Le Soul	52

## PART IV - BURNT OUT

Burnt Out	54
The Blade Side of the System	55
AIDS	56
My Optional Holiday	57
Punctuality	58
The Fool	59
The Bills	60
Beyond One's Means	61
Plastics Jones or Credit Card Junkie	62
Subtle Racism	63
Beyond The Horizon	64
Cut The Crap	65
A Party Outside of the Hood	66
Decaffeinated	67
Priority	68
Popcorn Gourmet	69
Rochester Minnesota or Someplace Similar	70

## PART V - WHEN I FIRST FALL IN LOVE

When I First Fall In Love	72
After The First Time	73
My Darling I Can't	74
Should I Take You Into My Heart	75
Legendary Intrigue	76
Hidden Agenda	77
Savor This Feeling	78
On The Subject of Love	79
Unhealthy Love	80
You Always Ask	81
For Women Who Share Men	82
A Nightmare About Losing You	83
Convenient Friendship	84
It's Time To Relocate	85
Men	86
Lovers' Quarrel	87
To Women Who Once Loved A Preacher	88
And Then You Left Me	89
A Baby I Don't Want You No Mo Blues Song	90
Back To Dark Brown Pantyhose and Things	92
I Love You	93
One Person's Opinion of Marriage	94
Another Side of Marriage	95
Forget It Sister or At Least Forgive	96





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**PART I**

**SPLINTERS IN THE LADDER  
TO SUCCESS**

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## SPLINTERS IN THE LADDER TO SUCCESS

There ain't no crystal steps like  
the poet said  
how can one possibly get ahead?  
just stifling splinters instead  
advantages remain to our  
disadvantage as the "going up"  
elevator continues to neglect  
traditionally denied  
access.  
still jumping through hoops  
swimming across ice cause  
skating privileges too are  
denied.  
solid wedged soles of pumps  
and wing tips can not  
shield the skin against  
camouflaged splinters  
when attempting to step  
into a survival system  
grasping for champagne sips  
of power, a mercedes,  
a winter time-share on  
sandy beaches.  
mind basting in disillusion  
trying to justify all is well  
merely to endure the hell  
of podiatrist's tweezers  
extracting splinters from your  
weary feet aiming desperately  
to defeat the set-backs of  
lost civil rights acts  
and bills of equal opportunity  
snatched away by the rich  
and loonies or which ever  
comes first and before you  
know it another inequitable push  
places you back on the  
first splintered step  
...there ain't no crystal  
assistance here on the steps of  
reality.

## SHE'S A CLIMBING THAT CORPORATE LADDER

(FOR THE BLACK WOMAN IN AN ATLANTA MAGAZINE)

Envision a corporate version of  
Sheba  
her presence alone signifies  
power  
while her majestic body  
exemplifies control  
standing proud  
countenance displays a  
look of security strong  
enough to put Ali in  
second place  
dressed in corporate  
grey from the silk of  
her blouse all the  
way down to the classic  
pump resting on a  
marble step which seemingly  
rolled down from the  
corporate heavens  
personally  
to usher her up with  
CEOs just a blowing  
their incorporated horns  
announcing her arrival  
should anyone question whether  
she hatched from a leather  
brief-case-carrying mentor  
who recognized her talent  
OR  
the outcome of an epic story?  
then so be it  
because the Sister has  
brains and talent  
enough to lend  
...climb on up  
climb on up!

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

He said She looked like She  
wanted to be touched  
so He touched Her.  
She said He threatened  
to fire Her if She didn't  
...She didn't.

He said Her dresses  
beckoned His attention with  
each bend and sway  
clinging Her hips seductively  
openly enhancing Her breasts  
dresses for attention  
...you know like that blue  
silk one of Hers?  
She said Her clothes are  
conservative and appropriate  
for the work place  
She takes pride in Her appearance  
He said She wears sexy fragrances  
each day intentionally  
to arouse His masculinity  
...you know like that expensive  
stuff in the purple bottle  
designed to penetrate to the  
very core of a man's senses?  
He can't control the urge  
to taste Her neck which  
bears the sensational aroma  
She says perfume is as much  
a part of Her daily hygiene as  
wearing deodorant  
After all He wears suits and uses  
after-shave, walks  
up and down the hallway each day  
yet She never saw fit to grab  
His butt or press against His  
probably little private parts.

She feels violated  
robbed of privacy and freedom to  
exercise Her personal choice  
He says He never meant to  
hurt Her - He thought She  
wanted it...so He did.

## HER DESIRE

Don't ruffle Her  
feathers today  
the stomp in Her walk  
announced the mood  
while the rol-ling  
of Her neck says  
"She ain't taking  
no mess today"  
ain't nobody's  
business what Her  
problem is cause  
She's assembling  
parts on time  
staying abreast with  
the rest yet best  
you stay clear of  
Her today.

She carries Her  
coat and purse with  
Her each time She  
goes to the toilet  
when She gets  
this way

AND

that ain't to say  
it's that time of  
the month--  
just a need  
just a need  
just a need  
to feel She's  
going away someplace  
SPECIAL  
with a desire  
with a strong desire  
of returning to a  
changed place that  
somehow can make  
Her feel  
SPECIAL.



## PAIN PLAGUES THE INNOCENT

(faces of famine in Ethiopia)

She forced her tiny baby to eat  
the last crust of molded  
too-many-to-count-days-old-bread  
for nourishment  
for preventive measure  
against starvation  
last drop of milk from her breast  
sucked away many days ago to  
the point of blood drops flowing

America gave money to the cause  
tis rumored that their government  
holds back more  
than half the goods  
more than half  
the good are still  
victims of that  
pain which plagues the innocent.

## A CUP OF TEA AT THE WHITE HOUSE

(FOR MARY MCCLLOUD BETHUNE)

A proud majestic  
Black Woman  
once sipped tea  
from the finest  
porcelain  
on the finest  
linen  
amongst national  
leaders  
at the White House

do inspired Blacks  
to nip  
opportunity beyond  
mere clay  
dreams  
strong urgency  
to enter  
to do more  
to learn more  
to serve more  
bowed  
in her spirit  
which simmers  
like each  
line  
I visit her  
Daytona Beach home.

## LUNCH WITH SOME REAL WOMEN

(AND YES WE DO EAT QUICHE)

Wilma Rudolph:

Top brass bronze elegance  
bordered in a stylish  
golden setting of security  
graceful, poised super-star  
...and the food was good in Florida.

Carmelita Myers:

Genuine is an understatement  
understanding my pain  
without attacking  
or placing blame  
with ability to make me  
elevate the "whys"  
exercising her advice  
lovely Nellie smile any woman  
would purchase if marketed  
a friend - my friend  
...and the food was good in Atlanta.

Pat McClain Allen:

Girl, you know you bad!  
tough MBA sister wanting to  
better herself and her family  
assisting Bernice into rediscovering  
life can be fun.  
Struggling for daily Christian  
growth making me see some errors  
of my many ways  
and days of much growth  
...and the food was good in Minneapolis.

Linda Sesson Taylor:

History in the making  
home girl a positive talk  
of the town being  
the first woman and  
the first Black to run for  
judge in Jackson, Tennessee  
convincing Russell to  
bear the same proudness  
it's not in a NAME but  
what you claim and do with  
yourself, baby  
...and the food was good in Tennessee.

Jackie Underwood:

Always giving always sharing  
God-mother to my son  
brings nothing but warmth  
wrapped in packages of  
experienced intellect  
with ornaments of no regrets  
instantly taking on a new  
challenge  
...and the food was great in Connecticut.

Lou Willie Gill:

You are a family TREASURE  
strengthened by Jesus Christ  
being strength to  
four-generations of female  
responsibilities you inherited  
without permission with no  
omission of a single one's care  
and you wear  
the beautiful side of  
family survival most  
eloquently  
I assure you  
applaud you  
appreciate you  
...and the home cooked food was good  
at your house in your back yard.



## MY GIRLFRIEND'S MOTHER WHEN WE WERE KIDS

(LONELY PERHAPS?)

There is something to be said  
perhaps even slightly sad about  
a tall coffee cream colored skin  
Black Woman who sat on the  
front porch swinging  
after factory work after sun down  
letting her hair down  
from pink sponge rollers  
sipping ALREADY sweetened  
ice-tea smoking a long brown  
skinny cigarette  
listening to soulful tunes  
on her eight-track  
and going that's the  
way love is  
then she'd always join in  
on the line...sho nuff how  
it is.

## MY GIRLFRIEND AT 38

(LONELY PERHAPS?)

There is still something to  
be said perhaps even a little sad  
about a smart, tough, stylish  
professional African American Woman  
with beautifully salon finished  
auburn colored hair  
lounging on her futon chair  
serving her guest perrier as she  
plays her high tech CD  
and going that's the  
way love is  
and spontaneously unrehearsed  
her guest can hear her burst  
on time with line...sho nuff how  
it is.

## MAMA - ALWAYS THERE FOR ME

(IN MEMORY OF MY GRAND-MOTHER, ROSIE)

When I was a baby Mama's soft  
voice and soft fat thighs  
served as a cushioned compromise  
offering security  
a lap of contentment  
and nap-sack just for me.

As a little girl, Mama was kind  
and sort of always there  
greasing, pressing and braiding my hair  
scrubbing my rusty knees  
I remember boycotting stores  
and traveling to Bells, Tennessee  
for school shopping one fall  
supporting the cause  
of a man named  
Reverend Martin Luther King  
someplace in Alabama and Mama  
said: "T'aint no walk too long  
in this ole world if it  
means a better place one day  
fo you, little girl".

During my teens, invariably it seemed  
Mama had somehow turned mean  
I just wanted to be grown  
out on my own or something silly  
she trusted and understood  
as I ventured forth to discover teenhood  
among fields of error  
soon only to become cultivated  
by her simply being there for me.

Mama, it's hard being a woman  
pain often rides my back like  
a rodeo with sneak dump-attacks  
from life's saddle of ups and downs  
but, I just keep on hanging around  
some days I simply envision your  
lovely face knowing if you could speak to me  
encouragingly your kind words would be:  
"Now, now sweetie-pie, everythang's alright  
cauz the Lawd and me's with you  
every day and every night."

## MY DYING PRAYER

(In memory of a close young mother)

Please spread your blanket of  
warmth over me  
and reduce the chill of  
months gone past  
leaving me vacant  
hardly capable of fighting  
to hang on another day.  
A will to live beyond  
Thanksgiving  
pushing on into  
Christmas  
for the kids' sake please make  
them (the kids)  
a bed of comfort to  
rest on when turbulence  
attacks their lives.  
As the weak side of my  
life speaks to me  
softly whispering "it's time"  
I listen  
I take a deep breath  
and finally break the bondage  
and finally break the bondage  
of earthly pain - Amen.



## Girl Friend

(IN MEMORY OF WILLIE MAE)

If only you could play and read to me again  
Ah shucks, girl, I don't care which game  
to play today so long as it's dusted  
in down home flare with a gravel trail  
of innocent  
girl friend structure.

Pour herbal tea let's you and me sip  
the soothing language depicting our  
youth and dreams of marriage, children  
(a boy and a girl)  
allow me to savor the memory of bumpy  
bus rides over pipkin road for 20 miles  
to school each day one way while passing  
two white schools  
we were born  
before desegregation  
before bussing became an issue  
before pavement of country roads  
before Negro wasn't the word to use

My legs bare bicycle scares from gravel falls  
the taste of strawberries and muscadines linger  
we took tree vine swing rides with dreams  
of escaping red dirt roads on a one-way  
ticket to adulthood and city lights  
you moved away first - St. Louis a husband  
and two beautiful children  
(a girl and a boy)  
my turn came later - Denver, Minnesota,  
Florida, husbands  
and two beautiful children  
(a girl and a boy)

Tis true about life being so short  
for our dreams had chapters yet to be filled  
...would be nice to play and hear you read  
to me in that down home flare with a gravel  
trail of innocent  
girl friend structure

## COMPETITIVE FAST TRACK

Cited as a fast tracker  
zooming  
mentally through light  
years of accomplishments  
never slowing down for  
life  
assessment sessions  
no time no need  
got to be traveling on  
air powered fuel since  
living's too high to get  
caught  
on the ground  
must race faster now  
harder than ever and  
get back in place  
without having been  
missed  
nor missing a beat  
or else rival will  
arrive bragging the  
news of a mere split  
second's worth of  
lagging  
be it truth or  
fabricated long before  
your arrival  
perpetrated by  
envy  
determined to be  
number one contender  
on this vicious competitive  
fast track  
...is there ever  
a true winner?

## Bull S...!

The heels on my pumps  
are wearing out from  
pouncing on your gestures of  
inclusion which somehow  
traces back to mud holes of  
crazy bull s...!  
it never fails  
the brother sitting in the  
corner wears wing tips and  
a yellow power tie  
(even designer suspenders)  
attire seems inappropriate  
for the occasion

C  
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had he known perhaps the  
true environment, he would  
have worn galoshes.

## CREATOR'S DESIGNER BLACK MALE

Only YOU can carry that natural  
soulful warrior strut from  
Africa

The essence of something  
strong and marvelous  
made up YOUR existence  
long before

Imprisoned fore-parents crossed  
ocean waters  
long before  
nigger, spook, coon, boy  
was cheaply lined  
in the lapel of somebody's  
warped minds

Creator (God)  
designed YOU  
gorgeous Black Man.  
YOU are in popular demand

Take your step to a style of  
common sense  
drop the non-sense  
before becoming extinct  
...at your own expense.



## HIS FAVORITE AFTER-SHAVE

Each morning she turns over  
in bed and puts on a special  
smile  
after inhaling the aroma  
of his favorite after-shave  
she maintains a good  
feeling because of what they  
share  
she never considers another  
man's body touching hers  
tremendous feelings of  
joy race through her system  
from the mere thought of him  
creating such intensity it  
frightens  
her into absolute stillness  
she loves him so much  
handsome and sexy even  
the sparkles in his teeth  
could flash against her  
chest from across any  
room  
radiating flirtatious gestures  
a proud man a business  
professional astute in his  
field--he just travels too  
much  
loving Husband  
special kind of Dad  
to their children who's  
resemblance implies she only  
carried them for nine months  
patience beyond measure  
never yelled when she  
dented his new jaguar instead  
gently reassured her that's  
what auto insurance is for  
kissed and held her tightly  
until she began to feel his  
calmness enter herself  
creating total  
comfort

...Each morning she gets out  
of bed places the cap  
on his after-shave bottle  
this ritual of leaving his  
fragrance out each night  
gives her strength to  
rise  
each day from its aroma  
since he has been gone  
since the crash  
of Flight 107 last  
summer  
on which he was  
killed...she misses him  
still...she misses him still.

## BROTHER MAN

For some:

just your mere presence  
is threatening  
they hear imaginary African  
war drums pounding from  
no where simply because  
somewhere  
prejudice was fed into  
their minds  
...perhaps from old jungle movies  
...better yet today's evening news.

For some:

you have never been seen  
in the flesh  
strong portrayal of a big  
buck set out to steal the  
family jewels and shoot up  
on drugs  
stereotypical  
...perhaps from old jungle movies  
...better yet today's evening news.

For some:

your only desire for entrance  
into their culture is to  
gain access to their  
women  
they've heard how you abuse  
your own and leave your babies  
...perhaps from old jungle movies  
...better yet today's evening news.

For You:

get wise defeat the crap  
you are perceived as a  
problem  
when you discover YOURSELF  
hold back the anger  
release your inheritance of  
natural power  
before allowing  
your pride to become crushed  
down to graham cracker size crumbs  
from the big feet of others'  
insecurities brought on  
...perhaps from old jungle movies  
...better yet today's evening news.

## YOUR CARD PLEASE?

(1970's era)

Do you have a business card?  
oh let's do lunch  
you don't have a card?  
sorry then I'm booked  
for months.

...must now create a card to enhance  
a not so desirable status

Drop your card into  
middle class restaurant  
glass bowls for  
drawings of whatever give aways  
being offered that day

Collect and bulletin board review  
them when you're bored  
compare obnoxious  
want-to-be-in-to-what-evertitles

Wear a solid gold type-set  
card instead of a Krugerrand  
around your neck because cards  
will forever reign in America  
display it fashionably and  
shout it LOUD  
...I've got my card, take one  
I'm PROUD!

(1980's era)

But, hold it professional maniacs  
another statement gadget  
enters the act...  
"beep" me when you care to join  
me for lunch - the beeper bunch!

(1990's era)

Another charmer, "cellular"  
car phone - touch tone  
legal or illegal business  
or pleasure usage it's a must  
can't touch tone on that one!

## YO BLOOD!

Yo! some of the Brothers and Sisters  
they've made it Man!

Yo! made it where Blood?  
to the top my Man!

Yo! to the top of what Blood?  
guess to their rear-ends  
elevator of ignorance runs weird  
successfully replacin' brain action  
cause minds don't function this way

Yo! how so Blood?  
forgotten heritage, forgotten fact  
that mere skin color is a hindrance  
to many

BUPPIE fever! lost in the  
power struggle of the system  
lettin' it rule their lives  
defyin' self-integrity  
even worse...back-stabbin'  
their own  
skin tone  
losin' grip  
goin' over the edge  
greed, improper perspective  
losin' sight of  
beauty within  
one's own race

thus seeking refuge in  
others'

Yo! there are problems, Man!  
deep rooted like mooter  
grass into the hard core  
soil of one's soul

Yo! I don't believe this is  
what our Blood  
before us and before them  
were getting lynched for  
and praying to God for  
their children and children's  
children to overcome.

Yo Blood!

can you relate?

Yo! sorry to say it Man,  
but

Yo! I can truly see what you're sayin'.

## AN AFRICAN BROTHER I MET

African Brother

mighty fine lookin' in  
your French designer suits  
Italian hand-made shoes  
sporting \$60 an ounce  
worth of "emmmm" fragrance  
all over your body...  
American nature done  
bit you hard, Bro!

Strut your verbal stuff  
of going back home  
to Africa once your  
education here is complete  
free yourself  
if you can  
escape back  
when you can free  
yourself of the  
addictive hold  
American nature may  
already have on you  
my

African Brother.



## WHERE ARE THE BLACK MEN GOING

(FOR SOME IN MINNESOTA)

Where are they headed?  
I saw one go past me  
on 35W South towards someplace  
(Edina I imagine)

At a stop light he  
glanced at me quickly  
without even acknowledging  
my smile and certainly  
overlooking my presence  
he seemed to be concentrating  
on which way was out of  
something  
something long in place  
before he was even conceived  
pity  
the look on his face  
implied a look for another cultural  
identity.

## JUKE BOX

Saw a Brother in the lunch room  
who's eyes danced to a blues  
tune against the juke box  
wall of his mind  
playing a most familiar sound  
"ain't nothin' bout this mess new  
it jess seems like it cause  
it's messin' on you  
i said ain't nothin' bout  
this mess new  
it jess seems like it cause  
it's messin' on you"

The man's intellect and training  
signified the epitome  
of professionalism  
colorless shirt, wing tips  
exemplified appropriate attire  
but the politics!  
failing the course perhaps?  
He learned to look the look  
talk the jargon play the golf  
tone down the dapp  
of his "hood" walk  
but the politics!  
campaign of inclusion stops  
at someone else's decision poll  
not your own, my man!

I walked over to him, dropped  
a quarter on his table  
and pushed B-4  
you let it get you down  
I will listen and understand  
the tune I know so well...  
"everytime i get up  
seems there's somebody  
waitin' to push me down  
i said evertime i get up  
seems there's somebody  
waitin' to push me down  
but ain't nothin' bout  
this mess new  
naw naw naw  
it jess seems like it  
cause it's messin' on you."

## WHEN A COOKIE GETS CREAMED

(OR AN OREO IF YOU CHOOSE)

(1960s - 1970s)

At first you justifiably proved to them  
    \*your self-confidence\*  
sporting that winning grin  
landed a high paying job  
then  
the "Unannounced Challenge" began

You received positive strokes  
demonstrated a flexible work attitude  
bought dark suits white shirts  
power ties  
and even wore those  
big ole ugly heavy shoes

You matriculated among the finest  
earned complex degrees  
technically competent  
in your field  
great on the golf course  
spoke in the right dialect  
eliminated inner-city connections  
"Unannounced Challenge" gets real busy

You were a go getter  
displayed potential  
felt privileged on the  
turf of perceived arrival  
no time for demonstrations  
and crazy Negro boycotts  
you had no civil rights troubles  
yet fashionably you sported  
an afro hair cut when told  
it was okay at the cost  
of someone else's struggles

(1980s - 1990s)

you discovered being Black was  
cool and okay so you stepped  
into yourself one day  
then  
It seemed all of a sudden  
your livelihood changed  
you were no longer  
perceived the same  
team player  
paranoid they say  
emotional and bitter  
good ole boy image  
now stripped away  
Unannounced challenge was  
attacking away.

You now reside in a revolving  
door frame of mind  
real confused always wondering  
back and forth  
'what happened after all this time?'  
you glance around the premises  
and surprise! before your eyes!  
    \*a young self-confident individual\*  
making introductory rounds  
sporting that winning grin  
wearing a dark suit  
white shirt  
power tie  
and those big ole ugly heavy shoes.

## BUDDIES

I shutter to think you actually  
believe success sprouted its seed  
under the heels of your nike shoes and  
fancy loafers

Your juices originated from a  
special vineyard who's heritage is  
never to be stored on a shelf of  
forgotten silence in your condo or  
trunks of your bmw

The spirit of freedom was laboriously  
earned for you  
to live  
to learn  
to grow  
to pass it on  
It is your duty to pass it on...

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PART II

BEYOND WATER COLORS

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## BEYOND WATER COLORS

My daughter's innocence of  
prejudice saddens me  
yet I know a fact-of-life  
story  
must be told  
this time about  
her lovely black face  
shinny brown nappy  
hair  
and where equality  
becomes erased  
based upon race  
or skin color  
creating definite  
shades of truth  
drawn far  
beyond  
water colors.

## FINE ART

Little children depict a  
fine art  
of innocence which I long  
to sculpture permanently  
into the hearts of  
adolescence and adulthood

imagine  
a canvass embellished  
in peace, equality, trust  
overthrowing the realism of  
drugs, violence, abuse, prejudice  
paint  
away worry, fear, sickness

accent  
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ting

instead joy, blessings and security  
in knowing that life depicts  
the fine art of innocence framed  
eloquently in LOVE.

## ATTITUDINAL YOU

There is a sense of pride that oughta  
reside inside the very depths of you  
so reach in and grab what's  
rightfully yours if you  
really care about YOU.

## CHIN UP!

(FOR MY DAUGHTER, ROSLYN)

softness

in this world wears  
thin unless your  
chin  
is lined with bones  
of steel, honey

yet

holding it up becomes  
a must against  
society's  
cruelty, hatred, greed  
instilling

hardness

but you can whip it!  
keep that chin up  
please  
especially during  
times when it  
feels like hanging  
below your  
knees.

## SOMETEEN SUICIDE SYNDROME

I imagined transforming  
your thoughts  
into myself and it  
terrified me  
those cold, blank stares  
bored with the absolutes  
that reside in you daily  
dissatisfied with school  
people, family  
life threatening yourself  
against yourself  
lacking security and belief  
in my love

passing on failure  
developing pessimistic  
posture which slumps your  
frame of mind into  
hopelessness  
when did this attitude  
really begin?  
taking a bottle of pills  
solutions not the pain  
I feel your needs  
there is no gain  
in this web of confusion  
for me either  
I reach out to merely touch  
the palms of your hands  
please reach back...  
for starters  
I will even  
settle for the touch of  
one finger-tip rather  
than view your backside  
travel off into this  
continued journey  
of silence  
of fear  
of suicide...  
I do love you.





## PRETTY BRAIDS

When you don't feel braids are  
pretty little girl  
cause all the kids at school  
have long blond curls  
then the loss is yours but  
perhaps my fault  
since you are missing your  
identity little girl.

You become off sync when  
the hour hand of  
your mind-set takes  
a malfunctioned  
stroll backwards then  
you can not see  
braids as being  
pretty little girl.

Applaud the beauty  
acknowledge the art  
embroidered in style and  
rows of distinctive  
heritage little girl  
learn to wear them proudly.

## FROM DUST TO MUD

(For Kaye and the rest of us)

Skinny legs nappy hair  
wide eyed inquisitive little girl  
anxious to reach the end of that  
long narrow dusty cotton row to  
an easier life  
scratched hands from bolls  
pricking too deeply sometimes  
causing tiny drops of blood to  
peak out  
Tennessee hot sun bearing down  
so hard against her skin making her  
ebony times ebony to the point she'd  
forgotten what shade she naturally  
possessed  
a strong will to take a greyhound bus  
one-way to anywhere away and she will  
one day  
but only to find the escape often renders  
itself from dust to mud.

## BOYS' GAMES

Boys gittin' dirty from sittin'  
on the ground  
making weird sounds  
like "yo mama" and "hit me man"  
and "naw you ain't even bad".  
Yeah, boys playin' games  
like marbles and snake eye  
and silly stuff that's silly  
enough to be a boy's game  
but all the same  
I can beat them at their  
play any time on any day  
which is the ONLY reason they  
never allow me to play anyway  
...those silly boys' games.

## FOR YOU, ILLITERATE CHILD

Scores of yearning lives  
shed blood lost lives  
destroyed  
seeking freedom to read  
to be equal  
...for you child

hard labor-ridden bodies  
plowed fields cleaned  
others' nasty  
toilets  
toiled in factories  
...for you child

stop rotting yourself  
in wasted mind-set  
resisting knowledge  
refusing  
to pull yourself out  
of hopelessness, child

self-pride with emphasis  
on knowledge is free  
...but it's not  
cheap!  
going to increase in value  
everyday--the fee?  
merely being receptive to  
LEARNING.

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**PART III**

**SOMETHING KINDA  
SUNDAYFIED**



## WHERE DOES MY STRENGTH COME FROM?

(TO MY SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST)

embroidered patterns of  
wasted time  
worrisome rushing waves  
against my breasts  
I scream  
I surrender  
I stretch  
my hands to  
THEE  
...tested, tested no more testing  
THEE  
from whom I know  
my blessed strength  
flows.

## THE BLACK CHURCH EXPERIENCE

The essence of Black Worship will eternally  
bring about more than just a thing  
of going to church and sitting on a pew  
but...

Through dynamic drama only the  
Black Preacher can portray  
through exalting melodic sounds  
of music only the Black Choir can relay

Through spontaneous participation of  
chants, clapping, foot stomping  
on Sunday mornings into the late night hours  
with an afternoon pause for pot-luck of  
chicken and dressin', collard greens and  
sweet potato pie

Tis no wonder the Guthrie energized  
when Gospel at Colonus arrived  
delivered unlike anything  
Sophocles could have imagined,  
but understandable for  
Black Church Folk and with pride

Through wide-brimmed hats tacked  
with exaggerated flowers and  
feathers, high heels, wide-lapel  
pin-striped suits  
signaled Sunday going-to-meeting attire  
worn most proudly when you go to  
Black Church

Through it all, there is the praise  
Hallelujah!  
and glory mixed with the marvellous  
story of Black History, Black Politics  
and 30-minutes of listening to Sunday morning  
Black Church General ANNOUNCEMENTS!

Yes, the essence of Black Worship will  
eternally bring about more than  
just a thing of going to church and  
sitting on a pew.

## DEALING WITH FEAR

(INSPIRED BY REV. BETTY REYNOLDS)

The spirit of fear  
does not belong to me  
I possess better things  
and with the light  
of righteousness instilled  
within my heart  
no power on earth  
can conquer me.

## I'LL SETTLE FOR PEACE

A thunderstorm rages  
in my soul

and my heart cries for  
calmness to

settle in somehow  
perhaps a

bit of sunshine or  
a rainbow's

glimpse within my view  
within my life

I seek gentle calmness  
of the spirit

mere

PEACE.

## A PREACHER ONCE SAID...

(FOR REV. JIM PRICE)

...I want very much to confess  
of wanting a little  
trailer house  
a red pick-up truck  
and a corner vegetable stand  
down in Mississippi  
somewhere

maybe come into town once or  
twice a month maybe  
less  
hang up this metropolitan mess  
of a life style forsaking  
cold weather and freeway  
blues

Settle into a small rural  
congregation perhaps take on  
a wife  
who sings and cooks  
corn bread from  
scratch

As for now I must resign to  
saving souls of these  
professional  
cosmopolitan  
congregational folk.

## FAMILY TREES

(God Bless You Aunt Lizzie Mae at 85)

FAMILY TREES don't grow  
overnight  
but are often destroyed in a single  
asinine fight  
instigated by an uncle, an aunt  
a sister or brother and even  
more devastating when it's  
father or mother

Family ties should extend  
beyond  
measure be adhesively held  
through hardship or pleasure  
mistakes occur from cousins  
or grand pa, the steps  
the fosters and occasionally  
grand - ma

Family tradition depicts  
honor  
embellished deeply with pride  
from generation to generation  
heritage should be exemplified  
by the old, the young  
through you and me in order  
to preserve the sacred  
FAMILY TREES.



## THE HALLELUJAH AMEN SONG POEM

There is no time  
but the present time  
to shout and praise God's name  
whether here in Minnesota  
South Africa or Desert Shield  
The TRUTH is real --  
so loudly proclaim  
HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH, AMEN, AMEN

I know y'all can relate  
to excruciating societal  
pressures we've gained  
influenced by drugs, aids, inequality  
somehow we all feel the PAIN  
children having children  
parents killing THEIR  
children from stress  
policemen killing OUR  
children what a mess!  
The TRUTH is real --  
so loudly proclaim  
HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH, AMEN, AMEN

War is alive and killing  
innocent people  
nuclear bombs and missiles are real  
My higher power resides not  
in the White House  
yet successful praying power  
is needed for healthy success  
in the White House  
Our Miracle cure  
already suffered and died  
and HE's coming back again  
for The TRUTH is real --  
so loudly proclaim  
HALLELUJAH, HALLELUJAH, AMEN, AMEN.

## SOME HELL OF A GAIN

Over aggressive behavior  
wrecks the nervous system  
when  
green blood pumps through the  
veins stimulating selfishness  
usually chilling the efforts  
of team play

such attained success  
pays well despite the  
cost  
of one's soul - perhaps  
that makes for some  
hell of a gain.

## ARTISTIC SIMPLICITY

(SOME OF MINNESOTA'S FINEST)

Miripiri and Aiken, Seitu

Stephan and Alvin's paintings

instill life-like patterns

of natural delightfulness

within my heart

Mari and Steeles, Sounds

and Doc's gospel music

unclogs life's mental

arteries as each sweet

note soothingly flows

within my soul

Abdul...show time!

August and Gordon

Leon and Gerri's writings

massage my temples sending

messages of insight

I breath in foresight

digest wisdom without

strain and meditate

What a blessed joy having

access to these and other

artistic simplicities.

## AFRICAN DRUMS AND AFRICAN DANCER

There were no telephones no televisions  
no headsets no VCRs just sounds of  
the beat...the beat...the beat  
from the African drums  
that pulsated, stimulated the body  
all over - clean down to  
the feet...the feet...the feet  
echoing the news around the  
villages throughout the homesteads  
landing inside every body who knew  
the meaning of  
the beat...the beat...the beat  
a language the white man could not  
understand and the master plan  
was to communicate  
good news (marriages, births), welfare  
warfare, bad news (sickness, death) slave  
hunters in the territory news,  
take cover news -- all could be heard in  
the beat...the beat...the beat...

(Enter the Dancer)

hmm, hmm, hmm, move dan-cer, move dan-cer  
move to that controlled language  
that jolts the mus-cles, uncontrollably  
across your own space and places  
your body in sync with  
the beat...the beat...the beat  
making the African dan-cer create  
visual interpretation of the  
good news (marriages, births), welfare,  
warfare, bad news (sickness, death) slave  
hunters in the territory news,  
take cover news -- remaining in groove to  
the beat...the beat...the beat  
move African dan-cer move African dan-cer  
across your own space keeping  
the language pace set to  
the beat...the beat...the beat  
of the African drums!

## "TASTE DE LE SOUL"

(MOST DELECTABLE AND PROPER)

Fried chicken  
and corn bread dressin'  
collard greens mixed with smoked  
ham hocks, cha cha pickles  
chicken and dumplings (pronounced dump-lins)  
chitterlings (please, the word is chit-lins)  
slab of ribs  
sauteed in Leroy Burns'  
barbecue sauce  
(or whomever your  
daddy is)  
hot louisiana sauce  
for sizzling  
buffalo and catfish  
fried among slices of onion  
don't forget the okra  
pig feet  
pig ear sandwich  
some spicy dirty rice  
macaroni and cheese (real-not kraft)  
sopping up sweet honey  
child if  
you like corn bread  
throw some buttermilk  
in the glass and  
go for it  
first day of every  
year serve some  
black-eyed peas  
oh! and what about  
some grits and gravy  
for breakfast escorted  
by fat-back if you dare  
hot biscuits and sorghum (pronounced sah-gum)  
stick to your ribs  
kind of food...huh? blackberry cobbler  
(pronounced cob-bla)  
banana pudding (please say pud'en)  
sweet-potato pie (it's okay to say tater)  
egg custard , coconut cake  
homemade ice-cream (just say cream)  
and so on and so on...wash it  
down with some red soda water  
and ALREADY sweetened ice-tea!  
(Somebody out there must  
know what I'm talkin' about)

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## PART IV

BURNT OUT

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## BURNT OUT

The absolute hell with  
stress tests  
cure yourself by using  
common sense  
reinforced by exercising  
sanity  
for a change.  
Should you find  
yourself unable  
to handle such  
prescription - then  
QUICKLY  
leave the rest  
of us alone!

## THE BLADE SIDE OF THE SYSTEM

(PAIN)

Pain seeks a place to lodge  
in minds and hearts of  
the strongest from time to time  
someone - anyone - yours  
mine.

Opportunities within qualifying grasps  
yet unattainable due to  
sexism, racism, political criticism,  
undeserving promotions  
someone's too old while others  
encounter unexplainable  
demotions.

No relief appears available as  
blood-shot eyes scream in agony  
from hang-overs, drug downers  
hang-ups, chips on shoulders  
behind reasons therapists can  
ONLY define  
but can not fix.

Society owes me nothing?  
I owe my children more.  
Shame it seems, the blade  
side of the system creates  
deeper wombs than the finest  
surgeon can possibly  
repair.



## AIDS

It's deadly it's serious  
IT'S REAL

It's mixed matched  
up and down inside out  
uptown downtown  
it's him it's her  
an unborn child  
it's intimate  
it's non-racial  
it's sad it's lonely  
it's blood transfusions  
drug shoot-up usage  
spreading epidemic  
got condom machines  
even in girls' rest rooms  
to caution you to be  
cautious.

## MY OPTIONAL HOLIDAY

Just leave ME be  
today please

(space, space, space)

free myself of freeway  
traffic with ease  
no shower or make-up just  
curl up under Mama's quilt  
offering hand-stitched  
security  
sipping hot mandarin orange  
spice tea  
tease me crackling fireplace  
sounds make me warm  
and cozy

I choose to strongly ignore  
a messy house with scattered  
little boy toy things  
while Maya's gentle poetry  
massages the tension and Naje's  
soft music caresses my spirit  
during this moment of peacefulness  
with ME.

## PUNCTUALITY

(IS IT ONLY ME?)

For those who know me  
understand my unforeseen  
interventions  
realizing that I honestly have  
no intentions  
of consistently running late  
yet scheduled times and dates  
tend inevitably to find  
a certain "me" arriving a  
tad behind  
in desperate attempt to show up  
on time  
darn it! for once I'll make  
punctuality  
some embarrassing moments have  
occurred unbeknownst to me  
skirt ripped in the back  
panty hose instantly become  
rail-road tracks  
one shoe is blue the other is brown  
under-slip is hanging too far down  
take a sip of coffee sit it on the desk  
it spills all over my NOW needed project  
rushing to vacation my car gets wrecked  
forgot where I was headed -- what the heck!

despite these incidents being  
all reality  
darn it! I remain determined to make  
punctuality!

## THE FOOL

nothing but stupid immature unwise  
ignorant  
some illiterate, mostly educated  
some pretentious, aloof, heathens  
self-righteous  
some altogether missing the boat  
others fighting to stay afloat  
lacking, backstabbing, grinning  
over-indulgence  
losers, wrongful winners, drugs  
alcohol, stealing, chasing love  
thinking he loves you cause  
he gave you a nice dinner  
and all the wrong stuff.

### ...continuance of THE FOOL

be understanding of  
the "fool"  
for most assuredly  
the "fool"  
feels error-free  
totally of sound-mind  
always the victim and  
believes everyone else is  
the "fool"  
if nothing more  
it behoves us all  
to be patient with  
each other  
for most assuredly  
there lurks  
occasional "foolishness"  
in us all from  
time to time.

## THE BILLS

When I get the blues  
it's caused by the bills  
piles of 'em.

    I hate paying  
    the gas bill  
    the light bill  
    the water bill  
    the grocery and car note bill  
I'm confused about  
    the phone bill  
what's local or long  
    distance bill  
    doctor's bill  
not to mention  
    prescription bill  
    and the dress shop bill

The whole thing blows up in  
my face and I get  
    billed  
for not having paid  
    bills  
so now I'm ready to be  
wined and dined by nice  
people like you who like  
to foot the  
    bill.

## BEYOND ONE'S MEANS

Dreams of raising a  
    kid or two  
with spit-clean sidewalks  
    cul du sac  
solar energized house  
    and a mercedes or two

keys to private clubs  
    while sending  
kids to private schools  
    a boat in the Keys  
tied to an  
    Inter-Costal knot  
from tropical fever of  
    Jones' keep up

dinner each evening  
    equivalent to  
dining at the ritz  
    good domestic  
help is essential to  
    ornament the dwelling

...take a check point  
    of this success  
bills galore???  
    then, I suggest an awakening  
and cut back on \$\$\$\$\$\$ing.

## PLASTICS JONES or CREDIT CARD JUNKIE

Thought of having a  
party to celebrate the  
burning of all my plastics  
so I charged a hall  
and refreshments

my wallet was too small  
to carry all those  
designer plastic beauties  
so I charged a larger  
one with windows to  
easier find the little  
cuties

feeling not so cute such  
a weight increase  
best to charge some dresses  
to camouflage celluloid  
or take a healthy route  
to lick this fat bout  
so just put those aerobics  
on my gold plastic  
please.

## SUBTLE RACISM

Had I written a poem  
for every weird look  
for every nasty undertone  
not to mention times  
disregarded discarded  
though visibly in  
attendance  
prompted by  
ignorance  
envy, insecurity  
more pitiful than  
offending  
...had I written a poem  
depicting each of my own  
experiences of  
subtle racism  
by now I would have  
quite a repertoire.



## BEYOND THE HORIZON

(FOR EUROPEAN AMERICANS)

A different perspective lies beyond  
every individual's horizon  
only with opened eyes can you see  
often it means spreading your  
wings and soaring over wheat fields  
beyond country waters and  
tasting the flavors of urban  
ghettoes  
for yourself.

Experience being rejected, kicked or beaten  
because you are different  
if you are Red, Yellow or Black  
you may already know  
if you are White  
take hold and go  
on a field trip to Harlem  
North Minneapolis, L.A.  
Chicago or the "real" South  
you say  
you visited  
Atlanta that's good, but  
did you take a look in the real  
side of the HOOD?  
(that's beyond peach tree plaza)

What about our democratic  
grand U.S?  
let's face it people  
we're living in a mess  
beyond the horizon of  
our immediate world  
lurks dark storms unfit for  
men, women, boys and girls.

European Americans -- (White People)  
it's very much up to you  
to clear the view.

## CUT THE CRAP

(TO SNEAKY RACISTS)

I regurgitate sour  
expectations taken in from  
your prejudice entree  
garnished in lies and  
negative perceptions

You flaunt a tray of  
false eloquence when faking  
me a welcome while perpetrating  
absolute stupidity  
during the stumbling fumbling  
toe stepping tune of  
real asinine-hood  
do yourself a favor and  
cut the crap!

## A PARTY OUTSIDE OF THE HOOD

...no  
i don't care for brie  
thank you for the offer  
avocadoes? don't think  
so  
caviar must be missing  
corn meal batter  
deep-fried style  
    (or something)  
keep the rest  
    pass on water cress  
sandwiches until  
    a later date another  
time perhaps  
    when I'm really  
hungry or  
    when you visit me.

## DECAFFEINATED

Take a decaffeinated cup  
of laughter  
an attitude  
of nutri-sweet  
a bit  
of non-dairy charm  
and voila!  
You've concocted  
a GENUINE  
fresh brewed phony!

## PRIORITY

I must save my energy or  
at least channel it  
towards a direction  
perpetrating peace.  
Too little action for  
such a large group  
equates to ineffectiveness  
for the most part.  
I listen to the wise guys  
while waiting desperately  
for the wise to surface  
thus yielding among many  
practically zero hit rate.

## POPCORN GOURMET

(FOR CARMELITA WHO NOW EATS POPCORN)

Those who understand the grandeur  
of life's precious delicacies  
can relate to the following

Shopping is fine, but can  
be enhanced the first chance  
one finds a good popcorn stand

I do want to see the movie at the show  
but if the popcorn sucks then shucks  
I'll just wait until home video

The smell alone makes me feel home-made  
and comforts me sometimes despite  
the craziness around  
generally I can be happy in any  
little town, once GOOD popcorn  
has been found.

(Don't let anyone tell you differently  
popcorn is a definite gourmet which  
must be DONE RIGHT)

## ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA OR SOMEPLACE SIMILAR

Some place beautifully designed  
in Scandinavian hand-crafted  
setting  
trendsetters devotionally heal  
the sick through traditional  
training  
ask certain visitors standing  
outside the marbled etched  
walls of heritage which direction  
the statue aims?  
does its countenance bare  
invisible blinders  
perhaps gazing past those  
at a disadvantage...  
comes with the territory  
I hear, yet some of us find  
ourselves living here  
pretentiously as the winter  
resident geese on  
silver lake's disguised  
tropical water during -25 temp  
actually believing we've made it  
to paradise for the winter

A past a culture a place to be from  
vizines our paths clearly  
through occasional dust  
stirred up from steps of  
power-play giants  
no time for divided withdrawal  
when America is still free for all  
and God  
remains in control  
Rochesters of the world  
mark not the end of the  
freeway...after all  
survival packages of  
chitterlings and greens  
can be imported now upon request.

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## PART V

WHEN I FIRST FALL  
IN LOVE

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## WHEN I FIRST FALL IN LOVE

Wish

I could always feel like I feel  
when I first fall in love  
nothing is so stimulating  
invigorating and motivating  
as the birth of love.

don't

mind traffic jams or grocery lines  
falling behind in my chores  
so what if I missed that  
once-a-year sale  
or if the electronic  
garage door failed  
to open at -25 degree temperature  
nothing bothers or gets me frazzled  
when the newness of love unravels.

sweet

and tender my total self surrenders  
to love's conception causing  
maximum contentment no resentment  
I simply - more than universe - wish  
that I could always feel like I feel  
when I first fall in

love.



## AFTER THE FIRST TIME

After the first time

...will he remember?

If so, how will he remember

will he think about it

If so, what will he think about

will he forget

If so, why and how could he forget?



## MY DARLING I CAN'T

Of course my breasts ache in  
surging Sheba passion aroused  
by Solomon stimulants from you

LOVE

quickly formed without breaking for air  
without waiting for the right sign  
ends even quicker...therefore my  
darling, I can't.

Your offer flatters my womanhood  
I think of potential pleasure merely from  
observing your finer than Billy Dee smile  
all the while listening to your Jesse could  
take lessons from talk all day all night  
again and again...therefore my  
darling, I can't.

Your soft satin sheets lure me closer  
and closer into your affectionate grip  
until a sharp knock against my conscious  
opens the door to my thoughts reminding  
me the time is not right  
for this  
for us  
due to circumstances of  
reality truth and time...therefore my  
darling, I can't.

## SHOULD I TAKE YOU INTO MY HEART

Should I take you into  
my heart as a lover, then what?  
do I cook lasagna with  
authentic ingredients in it  
no short cuts  
or stroke your handsome face  
and grace your ego with words  
of adoration when you  
have experienced  
crap-spat-upon-me-days

Shall I laugh at your  
monotone jokes even at  
sunrise or bring you tequila  
fruit juice surprises  
to refreshen your palate prior to  
your surprising me once again  
just when I thought you had  
discovered me totally

How dumb of me to ask the  
question "should I take you  
into my heart"  
tis obvious, you already  
reside there.

## LEGENDARY INTRIGUE

I could write on and on about  
    you  
simply because my thoughts  
go on and on about  
    you  
should you leave me one day  
die or merely walk away still  
I would write on and on about  
    you

decades after I've grown old  
and died suppose some  
romantic adventuress decides  
after reading this poem to probe  
my children's children in  
attempt to learn just who you  
    were

(I laugh deeply over the thought)

no doubt in my mind that person  
will find legendary intrigue  
which can only lead  
that person to also  
write on and on about  
    you.

## HIDDEN AGENDA

I have come to take you home  
    with me      NOW!  
hold you close  
become your thoughts of  
pleasure  
let you tip-toe into  
my sanctioned parlor  
offering comfort and  
peace  
which is foreign to  
this 8 to 5 rat race.

Exit the reality of  
this pitiful wretched  
    place      NOW!  
into my boudoir of  
sweet fragrance  
satin and berries of  
pleasure  
let me cushion you in  
serenity among feathers  
designed to float away  
mental anguish  
break yourself from  
everything      NOW!  
with the exception of  
    ME  
for this evening I assure  
    YOU  
marks the beginning  
of extended splendor  
    YES  
I have an hidden agenda in  
mind for you      NOW!

## SAVOR THIS FEELING

There have been countless  
stolen kisses, light brushes  
against a thigh in passing  
finger-tip touches  
causing heat rushes  
to stir feverishly at  
will  
savor this feeling.

There have been countless  
stolen visits wisped off  
into the nights, the days  
at breakfast, a cocktail  
a drive under the country  
moonlight even city lights  
and stars have witnessed  
this tiny seed's mystical  
growth sprout beyond a cheap thrill  
stirred so feverishly at  
will  
savor this feeling.

There have been countless  
stolen promises of eternal  
commitments wishing away all  
cluttered rubbish destined  
to pace ourselves at a tempo  
of unresolved mental anguish  
the beat transforms into  
melodious soothing passion  
from a mere touch or glance  
stirred feverishly at  
will  
savor this feeling.

## ON THE SUBJECT OF LOVE

I was just going to write something  
real serious about love  
but somehow the thought slipped  
my mind when I became  
angry with you  
my desire to write something  
real clear on the subject  
of love seems to have escaped  
me completely...

\*\*\*\*\*

...okay now that we have made up  
I can write something  
real interesting about love being  
wrapped in a package sensitive  
to the touch  
pulsates every inch of me  
day by day  
in a way that spreads  
a sweet tune of harps and flutes  
everywhere over and over again  
leaving a taste divinely  
defined as succulent fresh  
strawberries in the springtime  
sparkling like well chilled  
spumante wine  
love  
bubbles and tingles  
it teases, it pleases  
me enough just to write  
something serious on the subject  
while it feels good to me  
while I am not angry with you.



It's been awhile since  
you've heard from the man  
you love...

## UNHEALTHY LOVE

...too much sleep too much to eat  
withdrawal from friends  
confiding in no one but talking  
too much to everyone  
sharp headaches, short tempered  
no interest in what's going on  
around you

...reporting to work yet not  
really working with it  
home from work until it's  
time to report back to work  
week ends and week starts  
all running together  
all running too slowly  
a should-have-been-a minute-flu  
becomes a week-long nuisance  
since you lack resistance to  
fight back and then  
... he calls

...wants to see you  
you know you shouldn't  
cause he's a jerk yet  
you know you're dying  
cause you're a jerk  
for letting him be your  
dose of recovery - so naturally  
you say "yes".

## YOU ALWAYS ASK...

"...Why am I always wrong?"

you are not!  
but if you feel you must  
always ask such a question  
then one thing is clear  
something is wrong.

## FOR WOMEN WHO SHARE MEN

Perhaps you have actually  
lost a very precious  
element of your naturalness  
or your best  
became  
exceptionally less than  
recognizable to yourself

Ah! You say you know how  
to survive and yet  
you settle yourself into  
a second-class role

Understand that you do have  
a first-class choice in  
the matter...very much so.

## A NIGHTMARE ABOUT LOSING YOU

i dreamed i had tossed you in  
the air  
you fell and broke into many  
little pieces  
i saw her black hair scattered  
everywhere perhaps soon  
to be a bird's nest  
i imagined you both being  
wisped off into never-never-ville  
until  
she rushed over to your now  
fragmented parts and carefully  
began fixing you back together  
again  
that's when i fell and broke  
myself from myself and  
poof - i too became scattered  
everywhere  
into millions of pieces seeing  
my brown hair soon to become  
a bird's nest - i screamed  
i awakened in fear with chills  
you held me close and whispered  
"go back to sleep - i'll  
always be right here".

## CONVENIENT FRIENDSHIP

Happiness comes from within  
one's self I am told  
unless others make you tick  
at their convenience  
where is that special friend  
when you need him  
when your needs run deeper  
than occasional whatevers?  
perhaps he conveniently crept  
out in silence to avoid  
disturbing you from pain  
since he knows loneliness  
hurts you worse than bills or  
political mess and stress  
my guess is that he's  
ego tripping - out toasting  
the town avoiding you until  
it becomes convenient to  
be friends again.

## IT'S TIME TO RELOCATE

(WHEN THE RELATIONSHIP IS OVER)

The movers came today  
packed  
everything  
visible  
including yesterday old  
garbage  
simply  
because  
it couldn't relocate itself  
despite  
the smell  
of having  
lived here with you too long.

## MEN

(CERTAINLY NOT APPLICABLE TO EX'S)

There are millions of men  
in the world

some are short tall skinny  
wealthy poor fat lazy  
and so on and so on and so on

yet I always seem to attract  
the crazy ones!

## LOVER'S QUARREL

(WHO'S FAULT WAS IT TO START WITH)

Who really is the culprit  
here?

"Not I, "dear"

"Nor I, "dear"

## TO WOMEN WHO ONCE LOVED A PREACHER

(WHEN HE DECIDED TO CALL IT QUILTS)

Once I knew you well  
even loved you just  
as much  
unconditionally despite your  
calling - your profession  
you claimed to have  
known me too yet  
perhaps  
this is not the  
time for us, you said.

Mother nature's wand  
blew a fuse as the  
WE came along all  
hot and anxious  
timing seemed right  
for me - a cursed  
season for you  
perhaps  
a later time, you said.

I say peace be with you  
as you minister to  
the world while attempting  
to mend your own soul  
together with  
crazy glue  
read my lips...  
I can now comfortably say  
perhaps  
another time for you!

## ...AND THEN YOU LEFT ME

You saw me getting involved  
and becoming wrapped up in  
your love-  
making me only want to  
be with you only.  
You accepted myself over  
and over like honey  
and cinnamon creating the  
taste of sensationalism  
your love-  
making me crave every ounce  
of your sweetness.  
You knew me inside out  
upside down until  
no other degree existed  
except only to grow  
deeper and stronger in  
your love-  
making me hopelessly trapped  
...and then you left me.



## A BABY I DON'T WANT YOU NO MO BLUES SONG

Never will you ever  
find a love so deep as mine  
I said never will you ever  
find a love so deep as mine  
deep rooted unconditional  
right here in the presence of "self"  
gonna be mighty hard to find  
and never will you locate among your  
other little hussy associates  
I'm here to tell you, baby,  
never will you locate among your  
little bimbo associates  
the strength the support  
the compassion and the rhyme  
you're losin' this time.

Ah the passion, darlin' right down  
to washin' your dirty drawers  
I said the passion, darlin' I never  
mind washin' your dirty drawers  
and in the mid-night hours of  
your flus and fevers  
or the attentive listenin'  
to your constant whinin'  
I was always there to be  
your lover and a friend  
the way it's suppose to be  
through thick and thin  
darlin' you ain't gonna find  
a love as sensational as mine  
ah Naw, ah Naw.

Never can you ever create  
this authentic quality  
but you might find something  
that can imitate  
I said a mouth full, baby  
and it went beyond your  
level of comprehension, so  
let me repeat it...  
I said never can you ever  
create this authentic quality  
but you might find something  
that can imitate  
cause the real thing is me, baby  
right here in the presence of "self"  
can't no other woman duplicate.

I trusted you once  
I trusted you twice  
I trusted you again and again  
now you can just wave bye bye to Ms Nice  
darlin' here's the score  
I just don't wanna see you  
no mo - no mo - no mo.

Sho nuff you always look fine  
wearing that handsome grin  
that double breasted suit  
too bad I only know now what  
I should have known then  
those shoes you wearin'  
dear put the divine  
in shine  
but, that's okay sugar  
cause with you all that  
glitters sho ain't gold  
yes, yes, yes honey, you may  
look fine, but all that glitter  
sho nuff ain't gold  
and let me tell you once mo...  
darlin' here's the score  
right here in the presence of "self"  
I'm finally securely sayin'  
I don't wanna see you  
no mo - no mo - no mo.

(Ah yeah, baby, just like that  
stock market you be playin' everyday  
your loss is somebody else's good gain...)

## BACK TO DARK BROWN PANTYHOSE AND THINGS

(DEDICATED TO BLACK MEN WHO HAVE RETURNED "HOME")

Awakened by her soft lips at 6:45 each morning  
preparing him for the 7:00 o'clock final alarm  
he likes it that way

Stumbling half-consciously over the Essence Magazine  
she left lying on the floor last night  
hating to leave her warmth  
loving the thought that she is there

Weeding his way through her dark brown pantyhose  
hanging in the bathroom brings on his first  
smile for the day  
he likes it that way

Reaching for shaving cream, he glimpses her bronze  
color make-up, afro hair conditioner  
he can't help but smile proudly  
she always looks so good

He felt like a fool for having left her once for  
whiter things in life  
prayed if only she would take him back  
(and she did)  
back to where he belonged forever  
back to dark brown pantyhose and things  
he knows  
she believes  
he prefers it that way.

## I LOVE YOU

It requires very little  
to say I love you  
and I do love you  
with all my heart  
and I do love you  
with a lot of soul  
fulness I do  
I do I do  
love you.

## ONE PERSON'S OPINION OF MARRIAGE

Okay...i could watch sports  
all day Sunday and all day  
long on New Year's  
even worse visit your Mama  
or wash your sweaty socks  
and smelly underwear with  
my "things"  
or i could fix you chicken  
with black pepper instead of red  
fold the newspaper back when i'm  
done to your taste  
pick up your waste  
of course, i could let  
the stereo blast while the  
t.v. is on and always take  
OUR kids shopping with  
ME to avoid disturbing  
YOU with THEIR noise  
i could pick up your  
white shirts from the  
cleaners every week  
before i go into work  
and later listen to  
you whine about your hard day  
when you come home late  
for dinner without even a  
courtesy phone call  
then reheat your food

certainly i could  
do all of these things  
if we were to get married,  
...well, i don't think so!

## ANOTHER SIDE OF MARRIAGE

Naw! Naw! Naw! Now!  
You expect me to tag along  
all day in a shopping mall  
you must be crazy!  
have your family eat over here  
every Sunday afternoon--naw! naw!  
you want ME to run to the store for  
a loaf of bread after YOU just spent  
\$250 of MY money on groceries  
what? mow the lawn  
on my golf day?  
the bathroom is cluttered  
with your make-up and stuff  
so why should i clean a bathroom?  
that bed has a million little ruffle  
pillows on it and you expect me to  
make it up simply cause i got up last  
take out the trash!  
you are asking me why i didn't  
cook since i came home first  
...naw! naw! naw! now! wait a minute  
you got another headache tonight  
after all i do for you!

## FORGET IT SISTER or AT LEAST FORGIVE

You can no longer spend  
your best years  
wallowing in the bowels  
of wasted memories  
...let it go.

His other preference is  
freedom of choice  
best you discontinue  
mental desires to  
lynch--no point.  
Isn't worth losing the  
pot of hot grits you  
desire tossing in his lap  
where a pea-brain dropped and now  
resides...would only be a waste  
of your precious food!

Stop nagging over  
what isn't worth the  
stink in yesterday-old  
pampers that baby wore  
who doesn't get to see  
Da Da at the dinner  
table anymore.

Go on with your life  
Sister  
and be proud of it  
forget he's gone or  
at least forgive.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ROSE was born in Jackson, Tennessee and raised by her paternal grand and great-grand mothers Rosie and Allie Gill. Therefore, experiencing femininity incorporated with perseverance, faith and love may even be an understatement. The sincerity, wisdom and strength of these wonderful women instilled solid values critically necessary in surviving this "SERIOUSLY INCORPORATED" society.

ROSE feels that life offers an exciting journey when navigated by faith. For centuries, African, Colored, Negro, Black and African American People have traveled distances guided by faith. She believes all people must truly be sensitive to each other's culture in order to plow through daily trials and tribulations incited by racism. "SERIOUSLY INCORPORATED" touches on the gain and/or pain portion of the "piece of pie" inclusiveness from an African American woman's poetic perspective.

ROSE currently resides in Rochester, Minnesota. Her first book of poetry, "AND THEN I FELT" was published in 1980. Much of her work has been published in various anthologies. She has performed public readings in churches, schools, theaters, television and radio across the country. Rose is the proud parent of two lovely children, Roslyn age 15 and Adam age 5.



# **SERIOUSLY INCORPORATED**

**by  
ROSE**



Since the Civil Rights Movement of the late 60's and 70's, the visibility of African Americans in corporate America has become more prominent. Although the Movement opened doors and People of Color were hired, "Unannounced Challenge" began to surface - political survival. There appears to be continued rockiness in the weary land. Is becoming "SERIOUSLY INCORPORATED" truly the cost intended for gaining a "piece of the pie"?